

Lesson 58

God Punishes Idolatry

The Israelites disobeyed God when they made and worshipped a golden calf.

Studying God's Word

Lesson Time

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Have the students assemble in a circle away from the tables—either on the floor or in their chairs.

Bring your stuffed animal, Bible, Flip Chart, and any items you brought or prepared for this lesson.

Prayer

This prayer time is designed to help the students begin to understand some simple concepts about prayer and to encourage them to pray.

We start our Bible lesson with prayer. Turn to the Flip Chart Prayer Page. Briefly review the different types of prayer presented there.

Today let's say prayers of thanksgiving and tell God thank you.

I'll start. Dear God, thank you for . . . (insert personal prayer here).

Pass a special stuffed animal—prayer bear—around the circle, giving all the students an opportunity to pray or choose a volunteer to stand beside you and pray.

Very good! Now let's put our stuffed animal away, and we'll answer our Bible Truth questions.

I love you prayers—Adoration
I'm sorry prayers—Confession
I'm thankful prayers—Thanksgiving
Please prayers—Supplication

Bible Truths

These four questions will be repeated each week to help the students learn foundational truths.

What word means God is all-powerful? Omnipotent.
What does it mean that God is sovereign? God is in control of everything.
What promise is told all through the Old Testament? A Savior would come.
Who saves sinners from the punishment of sin? Jesus.

Bible Treasure Hunt

Before Bible Treasure Hunt, place a sticky note in your Bible to mark the first passage to be read.

Each week before class, hide your Bible somewhere in the room. You can use different methods each week to keep the students excited about finding the Bible. For example, you might set a timer, play music while the students search, tell students when they are getting warmer and colder, or choose a student to hide the Bible and let you or classmates find it.

We are going to start out today by looking into God's Word, the Bible. God's Word is true, and we can always trust what it says. It's like a great treasure that tells us about who God is and what he has done for us. But where is this treasure? You will have to help me with that. We're going to go on a Bible Treasure Hunt. Somewhere in this room, I've hidden the Bible. When I say "Go," you will need to look for it. Whoever finds the Bible must bring it back to their seat and hold it very carefully until it is time to look in it. When it is time to read, you can bring it to me, and we'll open it to see what we are going to talk about today! Explain the method you chose for today. Ready? Set! Go!

K-1st Lesson continues next.

Pre-K Lesson

K-1st Lesson

Pre-K Lesson

Review

Refer to the Lesson 57 Flip Chart. In our last lesson, we learned about some special laws that God gave Moses to teach the people how to treat God and each other. What are those laws called? The Ten Commandments.

Right. The first four commandments teach how to worship God. Let's see if you remember what those are. Point to each picture on the Flip Chart and review the first four commandments.

Good job! Now let's see if you can name the next six commands about how to treat others. Review the remaining commands from the Flip Chart.

After God spoke to the people and told them to keep the Ten Commandments, he called Moses to come up to the top of Mount Sinai. God was going to explain some other laws the Israelites needed to know, and God was going to write down the Ten Commandments on stone tablets with his own finger so they could keep these commands with them.

The Israelites Sin

So, Moses climbed up the mountain and stayed for 40 days, talking with God! Forty days is a long time! The Israelites started wondering, "What's happened

to Moses?" "Is he dead?" "Is he ever going to come back?" They couldn't go looking for him since God said they were not allowed on the mountain.

Exodus 32:1

Let's find out what the Israelites did in Exodus 32:1. Who has the Bible? Have the student bring up the Bible and open it to the sticky note. Read the verse.

Who did the Israelites say brought them out of the land of Egypt? Moses.

Reread the verses as necessary so the students can hear the answers straight from God's Word.

Was that true? Was it Moses who caused the ten plagues in Egypt and split the Red Sea so they could cross? No.

Who really rescued them from Egypt? God did!

That's right. Moses led the people, but it was God who rescued them with all the miracles. They had already forgotten about God and his commandments.

What did the Israelites tell Aaron to do? What did they want him to make? Make us gods who shall go before us.

Uh oh! They were pretty mixed up. First, they said Moses did things only God could do, and now they wanted Aaron to make an idol to lead them instead of God.

Do you think this pleased God? No!

Refer to the Lesson 57 Flip Chart. Look back at the Ten Commandments again. What was number one? Put God first.

Were they doing that? No.

And what was commandment number two? Worship only God. Do not make idols.

Right. But they told Aaron to make an idol for them to worship.

Remember, Aaron was Moses' brother, who had helped Moses speak to Pharaoh and lead the people, so he should have known this was very wrong.

Exodus 32:2-3

Let's find out what Aaron did. Read Exodus 32:2-3.

What did Aaron ask the people to give him? Rings of gold.

The people did what he asked. They took off their gold rings and brought them to Aaron. Then he took the gold and made it into a statue of a calf. A calf is a young bull or cow.

Show the Lesson Flip Chart. Aaron made an idol, and the people started to worship it! They said it was their god, but it was just a statue made out of gold. This was all wrong. But the people thought it was great. They danced and sang and worshipped the golden calf.

This was terrible! The Israelites already broke the first two commandments God told them to follow! They weren't worshipping God—they were worshipping a statue of a cow!
Would this idol help them like the true God? What can a statue do?
Allow discussion.

Statues can't do anything, can they? Someone has to make them out of stone or clay or metal. But that's all they are. They don't have any real power.

Have one copy of the Statues Game instructions printed for your use. Let's play a game called "Statues." Follow the instructions for the Statues Game then continue with the lesson.

Worshipping a statue or idol is wrong. And it doesn't make any sense. Statues can't do anything. But God can. He is omnipotent, and we should worship him alone.

Moses Comes Back

Meanwhile, up on Mount Sinai, God knew the people were worshipping an idol down below. He told Moses he was going to destroy the Israelites because they were disobedient and deserved to be punished for their sin. But Moses prayed for them, and God listened and showed mercy instead of wiping them out like they deserved.

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. Moses' prayer saved the Israelites from death, but they were still in big trouble! He hurried down the mountain with the two stone tablets in his hand.

Who remembers what God wrote on those stone tablets? The Ten Commandments.

When Moses got back to the camp and saw the golden calf and the people dancing around—he was furious! He threw down the stone tablets and broke them. Then later, God punished them with a plague.

But the people weren't the only ones in trouble. Moses had left Aaron in charge. He asked Aaron what happened, but Aaron blamed the people for what he had done.

Exodus 32:24

Listen to what Aaron said. Read Exodus 32:24.

Aaron told Moses the Israelites gave him their gold, and he threw it into the fire.

Then what did he say happened, what came out of the fire? The calf came out.

Was this true? Is that what happened? No!

Aaron's story was not the whole truth. He made it sound like the gold turned into a calf by itself and popped out of the fire! Ta-da! Just like that. But the Bible tells us that Aaron took time to shape the gold into this idol. He made it—he just didn't want to get in trouble for it.

Aaron and the Israelites were all guilty of sin against God. But Moses prayed for them, and God listened. They could have been wiped out because of their sin, but God chose to show mercy.

Continue with the Lesson Review Game below.

K-1st Lesson

Review

Refer to the Lesson 57 Flip Chart. In our last lesson, we learned about some special laws that God gave Moses to teach the people how to treat God and each other. What are those laws called? The Ten Commandments.

Right. The first four commandments teach how to worship God. Let's see if you remember what those are. Point to each picture on the Flip Chart and review the first four commandments.

Good job! Now let's see if you can name the next six commands about how to treat others. Review the remaining commands from the Flip Chart.

After God spoke to the Israelites and told them to keep the Ten Commandments, he called Moses to come up to the top of Mount Sinai. God was going to explain some other laws the Israelites needed to know, and God was going to write down the Ten Commandments on stone tablets with his own finger so the people could keep these commands with them.

The Israelites Sin

So, Moses took Joshua with him and climbed up the mountain. While Joshua waited partway, Moses continued up, up, up to the top of the mountain. Moses stayed up there talking with God for 40 days! That's a long time! So the Israelites started wondering, "What's happened to Moses?" "Is he dead?" "Is he ever going to come back?" They couldn't go looking for him, since God had said they were not allowed on the mountain.

Exodus 32:1

Let's find out what the Israelites did in Exodus 32:1. Who has the Bible? Have the student bring up the Bible and open it to the sticky note. Read the verse.

Who did the Israelites say brought them out of the land of Egypt? Moses. Was that true? Was it Moses who caused the ten plagues in Egypt and split the Red Sea so they could cross? No.

Reread the verses as necessary so the students can hear the answers straight from God's Word.

Who really rescued them from Pharaoh in Egypt? God did!

That's right. Moses led the people, but it was God who rescued them with all the miracles. But the Israelites already forgot about God.

What did the Israelites tell Aaron to do? What did they want him to make? Make us gods who shall go before us.

Uh oh! They were pretty mixed up. First, they said Moses did things only God could do, and now they wanted Aaron to make an idol to lead them instead of God.

Do you think that pleased God? No!

Refer to the Lesson 57 Flip Chart. Look at the Ten Commandments again. The people already forgot some of these. What was number one? Put God first.

And what was number two? Worship only God. Do not make idols.

Right. But they told Aaron to make an idol for them to worship.

Remember, Aaron was Moses' brother, who had helped Moses speak to Pharaoh and lead the people, so he should have known this was very wrong.

Exodus 32:2-4

Let's find out what Aaron did. Read Exodus 32:2-4. Stop before the second sentence in verse 4.

What did Aaron ask the people to give him? Rings of gold.

And the people did what he asked. They took off their gold rings and brought them to Aaron.

Show the Lesson Flip Chart. What did Aaron make with this gold? A golden calf.

What is a calf? A young cow or bull.

Young bulls are strong, and the people wanted to worship a strong god. But this was just a statue made out of gold. Could it do anything for them? No!

Aaron just made it out of gold earrings! How could it lead the people? This was all wrong. But the people thought it was great. Listen to what they said about the golden calf. Read the last part of verse 4. These are your gods, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!

Let's think about what's happening here. What are the people doing? Making and worshipping an idol. Saying the idol—not God— brought them out of Egypt.

Wow! The Israelites already broke the first two commandments God told them to follow! They weren't worshipping God—they were worshipping a statue of a cow!

Would this idol help them? What can a statue do? Allow discussion.

Statues can't do anything, can they? Someone has to make them out of stone or clay or metal. But that's all they are.

Have one copy of the Statues Game instructions printed for your use. Let's play a game called "Statues." Follow the instructions for the Statues Game then continue with the lesson.

Statues can't do anything except stand there. Worshipping a statue or idol is wrong. And it doesn't make any sense. They don't have any power to do anything. But God is omnipotent. He CAN do anything, and we should worship only him.

It was foolish of the Israelites to think that something Aaron made out of their gold had the power to save them from Pharaoh and part the Red Sea, but that's what they said. They ate and drank and celebrated their new false god. They were out of control! They were mixing worship of the true God with idol worship. This was a terrible sin.

Meanwhile, up on Mount Sinai, God knew what the people were doing down below. And he told Moses he was going to destroy the Israelites! They were stubborn and disobedient and deserved to be punished for their sin.

But Moses loved the Israelite people, so he prayed for mercy. This was an important prayer because God was ready to wipe them out! But God listened to Moses and did not destroy the Israelites even though he would have been just to punish them this way. But God showed mercy instead.

Moses Comes Back

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. Moses' prayer saved the Israelites from death, but they were still in big trouble! Moses hurried down the mountain with the two stone tablets in his hand.

Who remembers what God wrote on those stone tablets? The Ten Commandments.

When Moses got back to the camp and saw the golden calf and the people dancing around, he was furious! He threw down the stone tablets and broke them. Moses burned the golden calf and ground it into powder. He sprinkled the powder in the water and made the people drink it. Then later, God punished them with a plague.

But the people weren't the only ones in trouble. Moses had left Aaron in charge. He asked Aaron what happened that caused him to do such a sinful thing and make this idol. But Aaron didn't want to take the blame, so he said the people made him do it.

Exodus 32:24

Listen to what Aaron said. Read Exodus 32:24.

What did he say happened? He said the people gave him their gold; he threw it into the fire, and a calf came out.

Aaron's story was not the whole truth. He made it sound like the gold turned into a calf by itself and popped out of the fire! Ta-da! Just like that.

But we already read a verse that says, "he fashioned the gold with a graving tool to make the golden calf." Aaron took time to shape the gold into this idol, didn't he? Aaron didn't want to take responsibility for his sin and confess it. But he had the choice to say no when the people told him to make the idol, so he couldn't blame them for what he had done.

Aaron and the Israelites were all guilty of sin against God. But Moses prayed for them, and God listened. They could have been wiped out because of their sin, but God chose to show mercy.

Continue with the Lesson Review Game.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

Basket Toss

Students give the correct answer and toss the beanbags to see how many points they can collect for their team. Each basket has greater points.

Materials

- Review Questions
- Two beanbags
- Three laundry baskets or boxes
- Masking tape

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a tossing line. Bring in three laundry baskets or boxes. Set the baskets in a line, making each one a little farther away from the tossing line. Label the baskets with 5, 10, and 25 points so the farther away it is the higher the score.

Divide the class into two or more teams depending on size. Have the teams line up at the tossing line. Take turns asking the first students in line from each team a review question. When a student answers correctly, he will have a chance to toss a beanbag into a basket then go to the end of the line. If the beanbag misses, there are no points scored. If someone does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Keep track of the scores for each team on the board. Continue until all the questions have been answered. Repeat questions if necessary.

Board Game

Teams will answer questions and make their way to the finish on the Game Board.

Materials

- Review Questions
- Game Board (provided in the Teacher Kit)
- Dice, numbered cards, or spinner
- Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into teams.

Team members will take turns answering the review questions. If they answer correctly, they will roll the dice, spin, or draw a numbered card and move that number of spaces on the Game Board. Follow the directions on the spaces to move ahead, fall back, or switch places with another team. If someone does not know or does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Alternate between teams as long as time permits, repeating questions if necessary. The first team to make it all the way to the Finish wins.

Bible Baseball

Students will answer questions and run the bases!

Materials

- Review Questions
- Three chairs set out for bases
- Optional: gift wrap tube and a large balloon

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Set out chairs as bases. Have the students line up by the home base area facing you (at the pitcher's mound). Each student up to "bat" will have a chance to answer a review question. If he can answer it correctly, let him run the bases. If he can't answer correctly, give the answer and ask him to go to the end of the line and try again.

You may want the students to sit on the chair at each base while they wait to run to the next base or have them run all the way around and return to the line. Repeat the questions until all the students have run around the bases.

For some added fun, you can use a gift wrap tube as a bat and toss a large balloon for students to hit after they answer each question.

Bowling

What do you do with extra water bottles and softballs? Go bowling, of course. Students will answer questions then bowl for points.

Materials

- Review Questions
- Six to ten empty water bottles
- Softball or other small playground ball
- Masking tape
- Optional: dried corn or beans

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. If available, pour a small amount of dried corn or beans into the bottom of each water bottle (to add weight) and tighten the lid. Set out the bottles on one end of the room. Use masking tape to form a "lane" from the bottles to where the students will line up across the room.

Divide students into teams. Have students line up. Ask the first student a review question. If he answers correctly, let him roll the ball down the lane toward the bottles. Each bottle that is knocked down is worth 1 point. A strike (knocking down all the bottles) is worth 20 points. Take turns asking questions of each team. If a student gives an incorrect answer or does not know the answer, he can ask his teammates for help. Keep track of scores.

Goofy Golf

Hit the sock with the noodle? Teams must work together to answer the questions and putt to get a hole-in-one in this crazy golf game!

Materials

- Review Questions
- Swimming noodles or rolled up newspapers
- Rolled up socks
- Masking tape
- Ten sheets of paper
- Markers

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use the markers to number sheets of paper 1–10 (use more or less depending on class size and time). Tape down the sheets of paper around the room in a random pattern to form a golf course. You may want to add chairs as obstacles in the path.

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a rolled up sock and a swimming noodle. Ask the first student a review question from the lesson. If he answers correctly, allow him to use the noodle to drive the rolled up sock toward the first sheet of paper labeled #1. Continue with the next team. Take turns allowing team members to answer questions and continue putting the socks along the course to each hole, continuing from where the last teammate left off. The sock must touch or roll over the sheet of paper to consider it in the hole. The first team to reach the tenth hole wins.

Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first? Teams will race to the finish by answering review questions.

Materials

Review Questions
White board or chalkboard
Markers/chalk
Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.),
tape/poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1–10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!

Toss for It

How many points? Toss for it! Students answer the questions and toss the beanbag to earn points for their team.

Materials

Review Questions

A deck of numbered cards, or numbers and "wild" written on index cards

One beanbag

Masking tape

Two baskets or containers for cards

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place several rows of numbered cards facedown with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern (make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too). Use the masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

Divide students into teams and have them line up behind the tossing line. Ask the first student a review question. If he gives the correct answer, have him toss the beanbag onto a card. Turn the card over to reveal the points he receives for his team. Face cards or word cards are 10 points each. Wild or Jokers are also 10—plus another turn. All other cards are face value.

Have the student pick up his card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game. Next team's turn. If a student gives an incorrect answer, he should go to the end of the line. Give the answer and repeat that question later. Continue taking turns until all the questions have been answered. Add more cards to the grid if necessary.

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Bible Version

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